In the final newsletter of 2011, I summarized the year, as the time when Berengarra got back on track, leaving the difficult relocation period well behind and as a result, being able to concentrate on expanding and developing the program. Enrolments were back to 2007 levels, curriculum initiatives were implemented and resources increased. 2012 has seen this process continue.

This year we have successfully introduced several important additions to our program that have enabled us to improve the educational outcomes of our students. At the beginning of the year we were granted senior school registration and this meant that some of the Pathways students could start their VCAL course while still having the support of the Berengarra program. In previous years they had to move into the TAFE system for this, and unfortunately many struggled. This year eight of our students started Foundation VCAL and are now much better prepared for their next place of study. We also changed the way we delivered the work education and TAFE component of Pathways with the addition of the warehouse and market programs, which Graeme Barwise will describe in his Pathways report. Well done to all the Pathways team for their incredible work this year.

At Box Hill we now have a teaching assistant in half the classes, and this has led to a significant reduction in the number of supports (at least 20%) and better results in language and maths levels as revealed through diagnostic testing. Jared, Emma and Fran are our 3 assistants.
Their enthusiasm and skills have been a wonderful addition to our staff.

Attendance levels are up by over 5%, thanks to our counsellor, Marianne, implementing a more structured approach to engaging students referred to us with school refusal issues. Marianne has also overhauled the personal development program and now twice a week students participate in classes that discuss issues around bullying, anger management, resilience, emotional development and decision making.

New Staff Member
This term we welcomed our new physical education teacher, Rebecca Emmett. She comes to us after recently returning home from 3 years teaching overseas in England and the Middle East. Despite injuring her knee in the first week of term pursuing a hobby (the equivalent of leaping tall buildings in a single bound,) she has settled in well and is looking forward to next year with great enthusiasm. Welcome Bec.

Website
The new school website was launched at the beginning of term and while it is still a work in progress (as it always should be), the feedback from parents and educational professionals looking at sending a child to Berengarra is very positive. It definitely presents the school in a more coherent and informative manner. I would like to thank Council member Sue Brown for co-ordinating the project, former school Principal Leigh Candy for penning the words, Rosina Lazzaro for taking the pictures and Thomas for managing the website.

Ian Watson
It is with sadness that I have to inform the school community of the passing of Ian Watson, Principal of Berengarra from 2000-2004. Prior to this he served as Deputy Principal between 1995-1999. Ian was an educator of the highest calibre, being an inspiration to the staff over this time. His greatest achievement at Berengarra was implementing many changes to school processes that incorporated a more therapeutic approach when dealing with student’s behaviour and his legacy is that this is now the default mode in all aspects of the school. He was a gentle giant, a compassionate man, great company and all round top bloke who will always be remembered by the staff who had the privilege to work with him. Much of how I relate to students stems directly from his influence. To his wife Jan, children Darien and Kirsty, and grandchildren we extend our sincere sympathy.

Finally..............
For the last three weeks of this term I have been at home recovering from neck surgery, so I have to thank the staff for stepping up and managing the school in my absence. Julio has sat in the big chair during this period, and on my return this week I only had to look at the students and staff to realise he has done a magnificent job.

Time for a break. Enjoy!
BETTER BUDDY’S PROGRAM.

During Term Four, the Berengarra Pathways students went to Sussex Heights Primary School and became buddies for a group of students from Years 3/4. Each Thursday we read stories with our buddies, did craft and played games and sports with them.

On Thursday, 22\textsuperscript{nd} November, we went to Sussex Heights Primary School and had a Better Buddy’s Day with the whole school. We had face painting, a bullying forum with Penny from The Alannah and Madeline Foundation and Sandy McIver from Glen Waverly Police.

We also got everyone to write a worry and put it in a balloon. At the end of the day the whole school came out to the oval and we released all the balloons.
Graffiti Wall at Amaroo
Pathways students worked with a graffiti artist, Mike, to paint a mural at Amaroo Neighbourhood House.

Mike helped us design the wall. Then, we all learnt how to make stencils and how to spray them. We learnt heaps of painting tech-
We have used the coffee machine to train a number of students as baristas and also as part of the Work Skills units of the VCAL course. Pathways now have a beautiful new coffee machine. The machine was donated by Gateway Llen for student training as a Barista. Each day we serve coffee to people inside the Batesford Community Hub and we have also used the coffee machine, during Term Four, to sell coffee at events such as Social Inclusion Day, the Activation Festival and the Community Vegetable Market.

The coffee machine has been a great way for us to get experience in customer service, money handling, OH&S, cleaning and presentation.

Chris
Mindpower 2012

The primary aim of Mindpower is to give students the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills that will help them make the behavioural changes they need whilst at Berengarra. While some students struggle to be able to put theory into practice, Mindpower seeks to equip students who are at high risk of experiencing mental health issues with skills that will serve them throughout life. There are three areas which Mindpower covers every year: helpful thinking and self-talk, emotion recognition and regulation and communication. These three areas are seen as vital for students to cover at least once during their time at Berengarra. In addition to this, Mindpower also addresses bullying, problem solving, health education, sexuality education, keeping well, social skills, team building, smoking and drug and alcohol education among other topics.

Sexuality Education 2013

In 2013, Berengarra has been lucky to secure a grant from the City of Whitehorse, School-Focused Youth Services, to have Family Planning Victoria staff deliver three sessions of sexuality education to all Berengarra students. Topics will vary through the different home groups to accommodate differences in stages of development. Some of the topics that will be covered include puberty, reproductive anatomy and biology, relationships, contraception, diversity, sexually transmissible infections, relationships and consent and the law. These sessions will be run in Mindpower classes at the beginning of term 2. If parents have any questions about this program, please call Marianne at Berengarra.

Students’ perception of Berengarra

As part of the last session of Mindpower this year, students were asked some questions about their experience at Berengarra. Here are the questions and some of the responses from students:

Before I came to Berengarra I was:

Full of rage, constantly lying, struggling to control my anger, unhappy, sad, scared, angry, depressed, never went to school. bored, mad, upset, unhappy, anxious, scared, frustrated.

When I started Berengarra I thought:

What am I doing here? Why am I here? Will I make friends? Will I still be getting a challenge with my school work? I don’t want to be here. Who are these strangers? Worried about the future. I hope this goes well. People will tease me. I will hate it. School will be difficult. New beginnings.

On my first day at Berengarra I felt:


Berengarra is


Now I am:

OUTDOOR ELECTIVE
WITH JULIO, BEC & JARROD

(Left to right)  Bec, Lachlan, Kayn, James, Daniel, Kyle, Ben, Belinda, Murray, Riggs & Jarrod

The Outdoor Elective gang at the Warburton Caves during one of our many outings. It was a great day and some of the students Experienced for the first time what it feels to be three meters underground.
TOUCH, TYPE, READ AND SPELL PROGRAM

TTRS aims to promote learning by a multi-sensory approach:

A systematic programme of seeing, listening, speaking and typing
Seeing the words written on the screen as they are typed out.

Hearing the words pronounced as they are typed

Student and computer are interactive allowing for immediate self correction errors and feedback of results
With each successful module completed the student is encouraged to progress further.
Students develop their own learning speed, reducing peer group pressure, provides focus and support for a positive learning experience

Congratulations Kyle, What an achievement! He was diligent and stayed on task while completing the T.T.R.S program in English in 2012. At the completion of the program his spelling level improved by 4 years. He was the first student to complete all 24 levels.

Photo of Kyle sitting at the computer
What are the benefits of board games and card games for students? Some are obvious. Students enjoy playing them, and board games are opportunities for different groups to play together.

In addition, games teach lessons about getting along with others.

For example, games may encourage our students to:

• consider the concept of rules
• practise following rules
• have enjoyment

When our students play with older role models they can learn something else, too: How to win—and lose—appropriately.

Then there are the possible intellectual benefits. Many board games—including the classics, like chess, encourage players to:

• Detect patterns
• Plan ahead
• Predict the outcome of alternative moves
• Learn from experience

Kayn, James, Kyle and Riggs playing Monopoly
FROM THE ART ROOM..... With Anne and Fran.

This semester in art, the students have continued to consolidate skills developed during the first semester. Students used various mediums and technology for drawing, painting, wood burning, balsa creations, tile painting, screen printing, basket weaving and textiles.

The project “Create a Totem Pole” was met with enthusiasm as the students challenged themselves and worked co-operatively in pairs as they decorated a “totem”. From a design, students scribed with chisels, knives and used burners on the totems and then finished off by painting them. Some students preferred to use wood-burners to create their own design into wood plaques.

Animal skulls from a private collection were brought into school and set up in the art room as a lesson in still-life. Students tested their drawing skills and selected a composition to draw individual skulls. Students used charcoal, pencils and pastels on black paper.

Balsa-wood was cut, measured, curved and hot-glued into place and then painted to great effect to create the ultimate vehicle. We enjoyed seeing Targett Homegroup really take to this activity. Similarly tile painting was enjoyed by the students as they used technology to create a design to then transfer that design onto tiles using tile paint suitable for all weather conditions. Technology was also used extensively for research and inspiration during the wax and wire work and illumination activities.
From the Art room con’t…..

In the basket weaving art elective, we witnessed fine motor skills being exercised as students pulled and pushed the wet reeds into baskets. During the textiles elective, students used technology to help them understand the processes involved with screen printing onto fabric.

Lachlan and Anne
Students used batik, tie-dying fabric, and sewing skills to create cushions and finger puppets in preparation for display on our Open Day. A busy and successful Term 4 was had by all.

A busy and successful Term 4 was had by all.

Bryce

Christian

Leia

Hayley

James
BERENGARRA - THE CLASS OF 2012

Left to right - back row: Graeme, Justin, Murray, Jared, Matthew, Anne, Connor, Aaron, Griffin, Lee, Kyle, Bryce, Riggs.

Middle row - Marianne, Lyn, Dyson, Jared, Matthew, Connor, Aaron, Griffin, Lee, Bec, Jan, Cheryl, Leia.

Front row — Tyler, Mikey, Lachlan, James, Julio, Belinda, Kane, Daniel, Brandon.
On Wednesday the 21st of November the Berengarra School headed off to the Merricks lodge camp. When we got there we were sorted into our cabins and activity groups; after about half an hour we went to do our first activity. The blue group went on a walking path which went through the beach and the red group went on a bike ride, after about 20 minutes we met up and switched activities. Personally, I liked the beach walk because of the view of the ocean. When we got back from the activity we were stuck waiting on the bike riders to get back because the teachers with them had the keys to the buses. They eventually got back and then we headed back to the campsite where we had a bit of free time, then after a while we had dinner. After dinner we went to bed but some of the people were very noisy and couldn’t get to sleep.

The next day we had breakfast at about nine o clock. We had our first activities for the day. First the blue group had the tree climbing activity and then we had the orienteering course. We had lunch and then had 2 more activities, including canoeing and tree climbing. We had dinner, some went fishing others played sport and then went to bed. The last day we were out of the place by ten o clock then we went on a boat ride in Portsea while some of us swam off the pier. The boat ride was great and after that we had our lunch and got back to school at about three o clock.

Written by Mikey

Jason and Kyle (top)
Kane and Bryce (bottom)
STOP PRESS.

Would you like to continue to receive our Newsletter????

If the answer to the above question is “yes” please email us - berengarra@bigpond.com.au

We would love to keep in touch, and how good is it to be able to email you a much better production of the newsletter via Email, thus saving the school the cost of postage etc. Please also note that the newsletter can be accessed via the internet. www.berengarra.vic.edu.au
DATES TO REMEMBER

**TERM 1, 2013 commences**

Staff return - Wed. 30th January
Parent/Teacher meeting - Thursday 31st January
New student orientation - Friday 1st February

**All students return** - Monday 4th February
Activity Day - Activity Day/2nd week of term
Labour Day Holiday - Monday 11th March
Term Finishes - 28th March @ 12.30

**TERM 2, 2013 commences**

Staff return - Monday 15th April
Students return - Tuesday 16th April
Anzac day (no students) - Thursday 25th April
Students finish Thursday 20th June @ 3 p.m.
Report writing day - Friday 21st June

**Staff Conference** - 2 days in the week 8th July - 12th July